



# MIDWEST RAINBOW NEWS



**JANUARY 2024**

**VOL. 4 ISSUE 1**

***"You never completely have your rights, one person, until you all have your rights."***

**-Marsha P. Johnson**

## **HOUSEKEEPING**

### **DISCLAIMER**

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## **Missing your copy?**

Although things seem to be improving in terms of uniform delivery of the newsletter, please reach out if you do not receive your copy for more than one month in a row. Thank you!

**Midwest Rainbow News**  
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**Pittsburgh, PA 15217**

## **MAMA SAYS**

At the start of every new year, I sit back and reflect on last year and all the good, bad and everything in between.

We made a lot of progress last year with the aid of a group of outstanding attorneys. Long ago, I lost track on how many name changes they represented and numerous litigations on behalf of our community. THANK YOU ALL!

Recently I had quite a health scare. For many years I was infected with HEP-C. After undergoing treatment I was cured of Hep-C, but the damage to my liver was significant. A few months ago I was given an ultrasound of my liver and they found a growth. I was sent for a CAT scan which verified an abnormal growth on my liver. Medical here was great, explained the next steps and my options should the growth turn out to be cancer. In the end, it was determined the growth to be noncancerous. How great a Holiday gift was that! Seems Mama will be around a while longer after all!

My recent health has made me (and others) painfully aware that I need to find someone who could take over when I can no longer continue. I am 64 years young, so I can't help but think about what's next. If you know of someone who might be a great candidate, please let me know so we can make contact.

This year we are working to provide a way for those of you with children to be able to send them a gift for the Holiday's. The great people from Liberation Lit have offered to partner with us on this project, so you know it will be wonderful. I will keep you posted, and we will start gathering information between September through November 2024.

On behalf of Jordana and myself, I want to extend my most heartfelt gratitude to the wonderful volunteers who spent a Saturday afternoon writing Holliday's greetings to our newsletter subscribers. Your act of kindness has touched so many. Thank you.

With a Mothers Love,  
Patricia

# SONG RECOMMENDATION

The song "Critic" by Avery Anna is a good song that I think the readers should possibly get. I feel like the world judges the homosexuals and this song fits in with our community.

Ralph

Lyrics:

I didn't know I wasn't old enough to pick the clothes I wear  
And I didn't know there was a wrong shade of blonde I  
could dye my hair  
I didn't know you were an expert, could write better songs  
than me  
I didn't know you were incapable of hearing when I speak

What you want from me is unrealistic  
But I run around in circles, tryna fix it  
You tell me I'm wrong and I listen  
Convince me that I should be different  
Yeah, I love you and I wish I didn't  
But I do, but I do  
And I thought I was my own worst critic  
But it's you, but it's you

I didn't know spending time with my best friend wasn't okay  
Is it 'cause you know right when you leave the room she'll  
ask why I stayed?  
But I'm searching for approval from you  
And it's kind of pathetic, what I let this turn into, but

What you want from me is unrealistic  
But I run around in circles, tryna fix it  
You tell me I'm wrong and I listen  
Convince me that I should be different  
Yeah, I love you and I wish I didn't  
But I do, but I do  
And I thought I was my own worst critic  
But it's you

It's you, I should leave  
If you loved me, you wouldn't change a single thing  
Hmm-mm, oh yeah

What you want from me is unrealistic  
But I run around in circles, tryna fix it  
You tell me I'm wrong and I listen  
Convince me that I should be different  
Yeah, I love you and I wish I didn't  
But I do, but I do  
And I thought I was my own worst critic  
But it's you  
And I thought I was my own worst critic  
But it's you, but it's you

## THE PRISON JOURNALISM PROJECT

*The Prison Journalism Project is a great place for any prisoner to express their views while working to establish themselves as a credible writer and journalist. Many first time authors have been published on the Prison Journalism website. It only takes imagination and willingness to write your story. It is 100% free, costs you only time and dedication. Ask about their writing program and upcoming correspondence-based classes. For more information on how to get started, contact them at:*

*Prison Journalism Project  
2093 Philadelphia Pike #1054  
Claymont, DE 19703*

## WRITE FOR US!

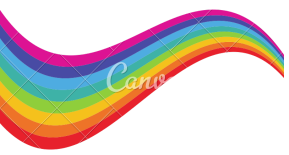
We are actively seeking material from our readers to publish in future issues. We will no longer publish messages from one reader to another.

We are looking for:

- Articles with accurate information about relevant policies, legal developments, and current affairs (cite your sources!)
- Tips, life-hacks, and how-to articles that our readers would find useful
- Media recommendations — books, authors, podcasts, tv, movies etc. Preference given to free things. Write a little bit about why you're recommending it and/or what you got from it.
- Personal essays on topics relevant to our community, including but not limited to: mental health, personal growth, what sucks about being LGBTQ in prison, what's cool about being LGBTQ in prison, pride, shame, self-acceptance, friendship, liberation from oppression, dealing with difficult family relationships, etc.
- Good news — if you have something to celebrate!
- Reports from your camp on conditions for LGBTQ prisoners
- Responses — If you have something constructive to add to a particular conversation, you can write a response to a previously published piece

## SEND SUBMISSIONS TO OUR PO BOX OR THE BLACK-PINK GAZETTE TABLET CONTACT

**IF YOU'RE A NEW SUBSCRIBER AND DON'T HAVE THE CONTACT ON YOUR TABLET YET, PLEASE BE PATIENT. IF YOU'RE STILL MISSING THE CONTACT AFTER A COUPLE WEEKS, WRITE TO OUR PO BOX.**



# ON OUR HEARTS AND MINDS



## IN MEMORIAM: AMBER MCLAUGHLIN

When waiting for count this morning I had a moment of silence in her honor. For me stopping my internal dialogue is not easy, and afterwards I noticed though I didn't know her I often think of her, wondering what type of person she was and who she had become before her trek down the green mile.

During one of my musings after our last Transgender Day of Remembering I thought of the concerns people have of trying to remember all who went to the great Mother and it occurred to me: why not do what Wiccans do on Samhain? Many will set a plate of food at the head of the table at the seat of honor, some remain silent during the meal while others talk of those that are gone. Afterwards, the plate is set outside overnight.

It is not really needed to remember the names of all those who walked, just honoring them in spirit can be helpful. For example one of the highest honors in the US military is guard duty for the Tomb of the Unknown. While many of the remains have been identified, there are hundreds of others that may not have had family or friends to honor their memory for giving service to this country which is why the guarding goes on. On September 11th I listen to Enya's "Only Time." I don't know any names of the 3000 that died, yet I do this anyways.

Remembering our transgender family should not be any more different or difficult. It should be done in a way that speaks to you.

Auntie Amber

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

Our legislative updates on bills of interest to our community will begin next month, February 2024.

## WHAT FAMILY MEANS

Well let's talk about family and what it means to us! Let me start by saying what family means to me is UNITY, let me break these five letters down for you. U-means unity, N-means, never giving up. I-means, we're international and T-means, thinkers which goes with the I! Y-means, you, are very special in every way that is possible! Never let anyone tell you different!!! Merry Christmas to Our Whole Community! and I would like to say HAPPY BIRTHDAY - to my wife and best friend Mrs. Tiffany Beckynn Round-Williams you are the best thing that ever happened to me in my life. I love you dearly, be safe and I'll be there soon!!. I love you all, never give up, be thinkers and always do the right things in life because it will pass you by! Take it from someone who experienced it one time in my life! I love all my sisters and brothers forever love your brother Mylowe.

## UNTITLED POEM

I lay in the dark, covered in fire  
Alone, cold, and sick  
And something touches me...  
I open burning eyes on concrete where I lay  
I see a tiny mouse with no back feet taking  
Shelter in the curve of my arm  
Slowly I move, and I pick him up.  
He doesn't care that I'm trans or human or  
anything  
Else. He had been driven out of the nest in the  
closet  
between cells by a larger, healthier mouse, and  
had found  
a safe place.  
I wasn't alone anymore. Asleep in my hand  
burning I slept at peace.  
I will keep you safe Little One, I promise.  
Fires die out and Phoenixes rise from the  
Ashes. All it takes is a little love.

Jessica Blackwolf



# HRT UPDATES

Unfortunately we do not all have equal access to the hormone treatment needed to further our medical transitions. MRN is offering this space to share experiences, tips, and frustrations on this journey.



## A WIN

Hello fellow alphabet tribe members. Today after years of trying, three times being diagnosed with gender dysphoria and two evaluations, I have actually started HRT. My road was not easy. Many times I got in my own way. There were also many times I was forced to deal with mental health staff who did not have my best interest at heart. There were times when I felt jealous of those on HRT and wondered "will my time ever come?" I know there are many in the same predicament, who want HRT. I say to you: don't give up. Your time will come. I have the following advice, take it or leave it:

- At every mental health meeting, mention how not being on HRT negatively affects you.
- Put in HSRs requesting HRT to make a paper trail
- Keep a written record of every meeting and request.

In closing I want to thank Mama Patricia, Bree, and Bo for encouraging me to not give up. Love to all, Lexie

## A LOSS

I... expletive deleted.

After 4 years, 7 months of fighting, the end has finally come and I lost. The worst part of it is I had a Dr. E on my side and I still lost. For those who don't know, that doctor sits on the board of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health and was instrumental in *Hicklin v. Precythe* in getting us hormone treatment (the name Precythe was misspelled in the filing).

Back in February I had a three hour visit with Dr. E and when she was done she collected her notes and spoke with my attorney and left. A couple months later I received a copy of her report in which she diagnosed me with gender dysphoria and depression.

My lawyer filed a Preliminary Injunction and Temporary Restraining Order for me to start gender affirming hormone treatment ASAP. The judge ruled against me using false information Centurion provided (*Wolf v. Precythe*). Centurion claimed that I had been receiving consistent care since my return in 2014, yet my mental health file says otherwise. My lawyer told me that we cannot appeal the Judge's decision. She gave Dr. E a copy of my DOC gender dysphoria evaluation and summary including Centurion's response and to say she was pissed is an understatement.

DOC's results are that I meet 5 of 6 requirements of Part A, but their reasoning for my denial is I don't meet Part B: "The condition is associated with clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning." Yet it says, "Offender reports her current lifestyle is unhealthy, as she is overeating to maintain a feminine appearance." Dr. E said I have gynoid obesity which means I have the hips, thighs, and butt of a woman due to low natal testosterone. I am 43 and I eat like no tomorrow (in Farmington I would get so much bread from the other inmates in the chow hall it would be enough for a loaf of bread, daily) which isn't healthy. My self-esteem is so low that I am more and more withdrawn from everything including going to Wicca.

My lawyer said since I don't have much time left until my release she suggested we go to Mediation. I agreed and it was set for December 1 here. Unfortunately the day of the Mediation she calls me to say that the Mediation will not take place. Instead she was to have a video conference with attorneys for DOC and Centurion and try to negotiate, but she was not confident that she could secure GAHT for me. She called me back on December 5th to tell me what happened... No luck on getting GAHT.

Auntie Amber



# IN THE NEWS

If you come across a news story of interest to our readers, please write or email to let us know! Thank you to David for the story below.



## ONLINE MAP SHOWS QUEER SPACES AROUND THE GLOBE

By Lily Jamali and Jesus Alvarado at Marketplace Tech, 1/2/24

Growing up a closeted child in the rural Midwest, Charlie Sprinkman always hoped he could one day connect with others in the queer community.

Now, as an adult, he lives in Portland, Oregon, where he manages a team at a consumer packaged goods company. In his spare time, he combines skills from his day job with a knack for tech to put queer-owned businesses that he's visited across the U.S. onto a digital map he's created, called Everywhere Is Queer. What started as a small project last year has now gone global.

Charlie Sprinkman: I am [the] CEO and founder of Everywhere Is Queer, a worldwide map of queer-owned businesses and queer-serving community groups.

I grew up in rural Wisconsin, you know, I didn't have out family members — I didn't even really have that many out friends in my community. But I even think as a closeted kid, I would have loved to have known the queer-owned spaces in my area, if there were any.

Later on in life, I traveled the country for a job in 2019, and I went to nearly 45 of the 50 states. And as a queer person, I was out at this point, trying to find queer people and just queer community, and not necessarily to meet them, but just to be in queer spaces. I was trying to find those spaces all over the United States. And I really struggled to find those spaces. And so I kept Googling, and all I got was the, "here's a queer-owned bar," or queer bar here. And I do drink, but sometimes I need to get a bagel in the morning, and I would love for that to be at a queer-owned bagel spot, if possible.

June of 2021, I went and volunteered at Brave Trails, which is a queer youth leadership camp for 12- to 18-year-old youth. And being in a space of 100-plus queer people was so euphoric. I mean, people weren't commenting on my voice for the first time in a series of days. So I kind of came off of that experience, that volunteering experience, and I was driving back to Colorado where I lived at the time and I'm like "a worldwide map of queer-owned businesses. Maybe we can make that experience I just had a Brave Trails, that euphoric experience, at a grander scale."

I dove into my computer in January 2, 2022. I posted my logo on Instagram. I am so grateful for all of the growth. I have almost 90,000 followers on Instagram, 26,000 on TikTok. Social media has been the core of the growth of Everywhere Is Queer, allowing me to get the word out of what I'm doing. It's also allowed me to just connect with a lot of queer-owned businesses and let them know "hey, we have a worldwide map. We'd love to have you on it. It's free. We'd love to have you join and hopefully bring more people to your spot." And that has happened a lot through TikTok.

But really, it's the map. Over 5,500 orgs have joined, so they all apply themselves. I've had 1,000s of people tell me, "thank you for this. I now feel safe with my partner to road trip across the country."





**Reach us at:  
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Los Angeles, CA 90010

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Kansas City, Mo 64141  
Chair Person: Kathy Franklin

Liberation Lit (inquire for free books)  
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Kansas City, MO 64171

ACLU  
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San Francisco, CA 94110

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Washington, DC 20540-4660

Missouri Protection and Advocacy Services  
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Jeff City, Mo. 66109-4510

Black and Pink  
6223 Maple St., #4600  
Omaha NE 68104

Centurion  
1400 Edgewood Drive  
Jefferson City, Mo. 63109

Transgender Law Center  
P.O. Box 70976  
Oakland, CA 94612

Prison Health News  
4722 Baltimore Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19143



National Center for Transgender Equality  
1032 15th St NW  
Suite # 199  
Washington, D.C. 20005

Slingshot (quarterly radical newspaper)  
3124 Shattuck Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94705



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